

Wrestling with God!

Genesis 32:22-32

Challenging encounter Jacob had that night when he and his family were making their way back to his homeland! He wrestled with God and prevailed!

Jacob had sent Leah, Rachel, the children and all their possessions on ahead so that he could meet Esau alone. It had been twenty years since the two brothers had seen each other, and the memory of that last meeting caused Jacob to fear for his life.

Jacob no doubt had grown up hearing about his mother's prophetic revelation while the twins were still in her womb – that the older would serve the younger. Perhaps he was remembering this on the day he talked Esau out of his birthright?

From birth Jacob had carried the stigma of being named “Heel-Grabber/Supplanter /Deceiver” (the meaning of his name) because of his unusual birth. But he had also grown up knowing the promises God had made to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac that just might be his as well. *What does all this mean for me, he may have wondered, since I've acquired the firstborn rights, and had that prophetic word spoken about me while still in the womb?*

But there was more. On the night twenty years earlier, when Jacob left home because Esau had threatened to kill him, he had his own divine encounter. The LORD had appeared to him in a dream and assured him that he was indeed the heir of the family promises: *“I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying (Gen. 28:13.”* Jacob erected a memorial stone on that spot, calling the place “Beth-El” (House of God), a “gate to heaven” (verse 17).

On this night, the night of the wrestling twenty years later, Jacob had another amazing God-encounter. “A man wrestled with him till daybreak” (32:24). The man later called himself “God,” and Jacob named the place Peniel, because, “I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared” (32:30).

“The man (God) saw that he (God) could not overpower him (Jacob), so he (God) touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he (Jacob) wrestled with the man (God).” The man (God) even insisted that Jacob let go of him (God), but Jacob refused! “I will not let you go unless you bless me,” Jacob persisted.

This was a life-defining night in Jacob's life; his entire self-identity was changed. He is no longer to be known simply as Jacob, the Heal-Grabber/Supplanter/Deceiver/Trickster/Swindler, but now he is to be known as Israel, the Prince of God, Contender with God! He had wrestled with God and prevailed. He had held on to the God-promises until the blessing came.

Why would God wrestle with Jacob over the very promises God had given him? God wanted Jacob to be desperate for the fulfillment of those promises. "No! You promised, and I will not relent. I must have the blessing! I may walk with a limp for the rest of my life, but I will have that blessing."

What promises in your own life are yet to be released? What dreams unfulfilled? What words of prophecy have been repeatedly affirmed, but not yet come? What Scriptures are yet to be realized? We are in a divine wrestling match, a wrestling match He wants us to win. He wants to know that we have His promises so solidly entrenched within us, that we will not let go until the blessings come.